

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

Opening of the Second Session of the Fifty-First Congress.

President Harrison Transmits His Second Annual Message to Congress, which is Read in Both Houses.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 1.—Promptly at noon both houses of Congress were called to order, in the presence of large and interested crowds of spectators. Numerous floral emblems decorated the desks of favored Senators and Representatives, and there was a merry flow of badinage over the results of the late elections.

The preliminary business having been transacted, which consisted in administering the oath to a few new Senators and members, the usual committees were appointed to wait upon the President and inform him that Congress was in session and ready to receive any communication he might be pleased to make.

At 1:30 p. m. Private Secretary Halford appeared at the bar of the House and presented the President's annual message which was at once read. A copy was also presented in the Senate. The message is as follows:

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—The reports of the several executive departments, which will be laid before Congress in the usual course, will exhibit in detail the operations of the Government for the last fiscal year. Only the more important incidents and results and chiefly such as may be the foundation of the recommendation I shall submit, will be referred to in this annual message.

The vast and increasing business of the Government has been transacted by the several departments during the year with faithfulness, energy and success. The revenue, amounting to above \$450,000,000, has been collected and disbursed without revealing, so far as I can ascertain, a single error of calculation or misstatement. An earnest effort has been made to stimulate a sense of responsibility and public duty in all officers and employees of every grade, and the work done by them has almost wholly escaped unfavorable criticism. In spite of these matters, which are a source of gratification, the credit of this good work is not mine, but is shared by the heads of the several departments with the great body of faithful officers and employees who serve under them. The earnest scrutiny of Congress is invited to the methods of the Administration, and to every item of expenditure.

FOREIGN RELATIONS.

The friendly relations of our country with the nations of Europe and of the East have been undisturbed, while the ties of good will and common interest have been strengthened by the Western Hemisphere have been notably strengthened by the conference held in this capital to consider measures for the general welfare.

THE INTERNATIONAL MARINE CONFERENCE.

The International Marine Conference, which met at Washington last winter reached a very gratifying result. The regulations suggested have been brought to the attention of all the governments represented, and their general adoption is confidently expected. The legislation of Congress at the last session is in conformity with the proposals of the conference, and the promulgation therein provided for will be issued when the other powers have given notice of their assent.

THE BRAZILIAN REPUBLIC.

Toward the end of the past year the only independent non-archival government on the Western continent, that of Brazil, ceased to exist and was succeeded by a republic. Diplomatic relations were at once established with the new government, but it was not completely recognized until an opportunity had been afforded to ascertain that it had popular approval and support. When the course of events had yielded assurances of this fact, no time was lost in extending the new government a full and cordial welcome into the family of American commonwealths.

THE KILLING OF BARRUNDIA.

The killing of General Barrundia on board the Pacific Mail Steamer Acapulco, while anchored in transit in the port of San Jose de Guatemala, demanded careful inquiry. Having failed in a revolutionary attempt to invade Guatemala from Mexican territory General Barrundia was assassinated at Acapulco for Panama. The consent of the representatives of the United States was sought to effect his seizure, first at Champerico, where the steamer touched, and afterwards at San Jose. The captain of the steamer refused to give up his passenger without a written order from the United States Minister. The latter furnished the desired order, stipulating as the conditions of his action, that General Barrundia's life should be spared and that he should be tried only for offenses committed in connection with revolutionary movements. This letter was produced to the captain of the Acapulco by the military commander at San Jose as his warrant to take the passenger from the steamer. General Barrundia was captured and was killed. It being evident that the Minister, Mr. Mizner, had exceeded the bounds of his authority in intervening, in compliance with the demands of the Guatemalan authorities, to authorize and effect, in violation of precedent, the seizure of a citizen of the United States of a passenger in transit charged with political offenses, in order that he might be held for such offenses under what was described as martial law, I was constrained to disavow Mr. Mizner's act and recall him from his post.

THE NICARAGUA CANAL PROJECT.

The Nicaragua canal project, under the control of our citizens, is making the most encouraging progress, all the preliminary conditions and initial operations having been accomplished within the prescribed time.

THE CHILIAN CLAIMS.

During the year negotiations have been resumed for the settlement of the claims of American citizens against the Government of Chili, principally growing out of the late war with Peru. The reports from our Minister at Santiago warrant the expectation of an early and satisfactory adjustment.

CHINA.

Our relations with China, which have for several years occupied so important a place in our diplomatic history, have called for careful consideration and have been the subject of much correspondence. The communications of the Chinese Minister have brought into view the whole subject of our conventional relations with his country; and at the same time this Government, through its legation at Peking, has sought to arrange various matters and complaints touching the interests and protections of our citizens in China. In pursuance of the concurrent resolution of October 1, 1890, I have proposed to the Government of Mexico, and Great Britain, to consider a conventional regulation of the passing of Chinese laborers across our southern and northern frontiers.

THE SAMOA TREATY.

The Samoa treaty, signed last year at Berlin by the representatives of the United States, Germany and Great Britain, after due ratification and exchange, has begun to produce salutary effects. The formation of the Government upon which will soon replace the order of the past by a stable administration, alike just to the natives and equitable to the three powers most concerned in trade and intercourse with the Samoan Islands.

RELATIONS WITH GREAT BRITAIN.

The new treaty of extradition with Great Britain, after due ratification, was proclaimed on the 24th of last March. Its beneficial work is already apparent. The difference between the two governments touching the fur seal question in the Behring sea is not yet adjusted, as will be seen by the correspondence which will soon be laid before Congress. The offer to submit the question to arbitration, as proposed by Her Majesty's

Government, has not been accepted, for the reason that the form of submission proposed is not thought to be calculated to assure a conclusion satisfactory to either party. It is earnestly hoped that before the opening of another session some arrangements may be effected which will assure to the United States a property right, derived from Russia, which was not disregarded by any nation for more than eighty years preceding the outbreak of the existing troubles.

MEXICAN AFFAIRS.

The friendship between our country and Mexico, born of close neighborhood and strengthened by many considerations of intimate intercourse and reciprocal interest, has never been more conspicuous than now, nor more hopeful of increased benefit to both nations. The intercourse of the two countries by rail, already great, is making constant growth.

RELATIONS WITH SPAIN.

The cordial character of our relations with Spain warrants the hope that by the continuing of methods of friendly negotiation, much may be accomplished in the direction of an adjustment of pending questions and of the increase of our trade. The extent and development of our trade with the island of Cuba invest the commercial relations of the United States and Spain with a peculiar importance. It is not doubted that a special arrangement in regard to commerce, based upon the reciprocity provision of the recent Tariff act, would operate most beneficially for both governments. This subject is now receiving attention.

THE CONSULAR SERVICE.

The legislation of the past few years has evinced on the part of Congress a growing realization of the importance of the consular service in fostering our commercial relations abroad and in protecting the domestic revenues. As the scope of operations expands, increased provision must be made to keep up the essential standard of efficiency. The necessity of some adequate measure of supervision and inspection has been so often presented that I need only commend the subject to your attention.

FINANCIAL.

The revenues of the Government from all sources for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1890, were \$463,963,080.55, and the total expenditures for the same period were \$384,618,843.52. The postal receipts have not heretofore been included in the statement of these aggregates, and for the purpose of comparison the sum of \$60,892,673.92 should be deducted from both sides of the account. The surplus for the year, including the postal receipts, was \$119,441,470.00. The receipts for 1890 were \$18,030,923.79, and the expenditures \$15,730,871.91 in excess of those of 1889. The customs receipts increased \$5,855,842.88, and the receipts from internal revenue \$11,728,191.89, while the expenditures for the same period were \$19,312,074.96 in excess of the preceding year.

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES.

The Treasury statement for the current fiscal year, partly actual and partly estimated, is as follows: Receipts from all sources, \$400,000,000; total expenditures, \$354,000,000, leaving a surplus of \$46,000,000—not taking the postal receipts into account on either side. The loss of revenue from customs for the last quarter is estimated at \$25,000,000, but the full balance of \$22,000,000 at the beginning of the year, will give \$6,147,790.58 as the sum available for the redemption of outstanding bonds or other uses. The estimates of receipts and expenditures for the Post-Office Department being equal are not included in this statement on either side.

PURCHASE OF SILVER BULLION.

The act "directing the purchase of silver bullion and the issue of Treasury notes thereon," approved June 14, 1890, has been administered by the Secretary of the Treasury with an earnest purpose to get into circulation the silver bullion purchased under the act, and to give to the market for silver bullion such support as the law contemplates. The recent depreciation has been observed with regret. The rapid rise in price which anticipated and followed the passage of the act was influenced in some degree by speculation, and the recent reaction is in part the result of the same cause and in part of the recent monetary disturbances. Some months of further trial will be necessary to determine the permanent effect of the recent legislation upon silver values, but it is gratifying to know that the increased circulation secured by the act has been observed with regret. The rapid rise in price which anticipated and followed the passage of the act was influenced in some degree by speculation, and the recent reaction is in part the result of the same cause and in part of the recent monetary disturbances. Some months of further trial will be necessary to determine the permanent effect of the recent legislation upon silver values, but it is gratifying to know that the increased circulation secured by the act has been observed with regret.

CIRCULATION OF MONEY.

The efforts of the Secretary to increase the volume of money in circulation by keeping down the treasury surplus to the lowest practicable limit have been unremitting, and in a very high degree successful. The tables presented by him, showing the increase of money in circulation during the past two decades, and especially the table showing the increase during the eighteen months he has administered the affairs of the department, are interesting and instructive. The increase of money in circulation during the nineteen months has been in the aggregate \$84,965,813, or about \$1.50 per capita, and of this increase only \$7,100,000 is due to the issue of new currency. That this substantial and needed aid to commerce resulted in an enormous reduction of the public debt and of the annual interest charge is matter of increased satisfaction. There have been purchased and redeemed since June 30, 1889, of 4 1/2 per cent. bonds to the amount of \$211,832,454, at a cost of \$246,620,741, resulting in the reduction of the annual interest charge of \$9,767,609, and a total saving of interest of \$51,576,706.

THE INTERNAL REVENUE.

I notice with great pleasure the statement of the Secretary that the receipts from internal revenue have increased during the last fiscal year nearly \$12,000,000, and that the cost of collecting this larger revenue was less by \$90,617 than for the same purpose in the preceding year. The percentage of cost of collecting the revenue was less for the last fiscal year than ever before.

THE WAR DEPARTMENT.

The report of the Secretary of War exhibits several gratifying results attained during the year by wise and unostentatious methods. The percentage of desertions from the army during the year has been reduced to 24 per cent, and for the months of August and September, during which time the favorable effects of the act of June 16 were felt, 31 per cent, as compared with the same months of 1889.

OFFICIAL RECORDS.

The results attained by a reorganization and consolidation of the divisions having charge of the hospital and service records of the volunteer soldiers are very remarkable. This change was effected in July, 1889, and at that time there were 40,454 cases awaiting attention, more than half of these being calls from the Pension Office for information necessary to the adjudication of pension claims. On the 30th day of June last, through over 300,000 new calls had come in, there was not a single case that had not been examined and answered.

COAST DEFENSE WORKS AND ORDNANCE.

I concur in the recommendations of the Secretary that adequate and regular appropriations be continued for coast defense works and ordnance. Plans have been practically agreed upon and there can be no good reason for delaying the execution of them, while the defenseless state of our great seaports furnishes an urgent reason for wise expedition.

STATE MILITIA.

The encouragement that has been extended to the militia of the States, generally, and most appropriately, designated the "National Guard," should be continued and enlarged. These military organizations constitute in large measure the arm of the United States, while about five-sixths of the annual cost of their maintenance is defrayed by the State.

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

The report of the Attorney-General, under the law, submitted directly to Congress, and by the executive departments, some reference to the work done is appropriate.

here. A vigorous and, in the main, effective effort has been made to bring to trial and punishment all violators of the laws; but, at the same time, care has been taken that frivolous and vexatious suits should not be used to swell the fees of the officers or to harass well-disposed citizens. Especial attention is called to the facts connected with the prosecutions of violations of the election laws and of offenses against United States officers. The number of convictions secured, very many of them upon pleas of guilty, will, it is hoped, have a salutary restraining influence.

THE POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

The report of the Postmaster-General shows the most gratifying progress in the important work committed to his direction. The business methods have been greatly improved. A large economy in expenditures and an increase of \$4,750,000 in receipts were realized. The deficiency this year is \$7,363,000 as against \$8,350,183 last year. Notwithstanding the great enlargement of the service, mail routes have been extended and quickened and greater accuracy and dispatch in distribution and delivery have been attained.

THE AMERICAN LOTTERY LAW.

The passage of the act to amend certain sections of the Revised Statutes relating to lotteries, approved September 19, 1890, has been received with great and deserved popular favor. The Post-Office Department and the Department of Justice at once entered upon the enforcement of the law with sympathetic vigor, and already the public mails have been largely freed from the fraudulent and demoralizing appeals and literature emanating from the lottery companies.

THE NAVY.

The construction and equipment of the new ships for the navy have made very satisfactory progress. Since March 4, 1889, nine new vessels have been put in commission, and during this period four more, including one monitor, will be added to the fleet. The construction of the other vessels authorized is being pushed, both in the Government and private yards, with energy, and watched with the most scrupulous care.

ARMOR PLATES.

The experiments conducted during the year to test the relative resisting power of armor plates have been so valuable as to attract great attention in Europe. The only part of the work upon the new ships that is threatened by unusual delay is the armor plating, and every effort is being made to hasten the completion of the armor. It is a source of congratulation that the anticipated influence of these modern vessels upon the esprit du corps of the officers and seamen has been fully realized. Confidence and pride in the ship amount to a secondary battery. Your favorable consideration is invited to the recommendations of the Secretary.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

The report of the Secretary of the Interior exhibits with great clearness and lucidity the satisfactory results attained. The suggestions made by him are earnestly commended to the consideration of Congress, though they can not all be given particular mention here.

The several acts of Congress looking to the reduction of the larger Indian reservations, to the more rapid settlement of the Indians upon individual allotments and the restoration to the public domain of lands in excess of their needs have been largely carried into effect so far as the work was confined to the Executive. Agreements have been concluded since March 4, 1889, involving the cession to the United States of about 14,726,000 acres of land.

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.

The policy outlined in my last annual message in relation to the patenting of lands to settlers upon the public domain has been carried out in the administration of the Land Office. No general suspicion nor imputation of fraud has been allowed to delay the hearing and adjudication of individual cases upon their merits.

PENSIONS.

The Disability Pension act, which was approved on the 27th of June last, has been put into operation as rapidly as was practicable. The increased clerical force as provided was selected and assigned to work, and a considerable number of cases engaged in examination in the field was recalled and added to the working force of the office. The examination and adjudication of claims have, by reason of improved methods, been more rapid than ever before. There is result of the act to the Government in delay, while there is much hardship and injustice to the soldier. The anticipated expenditure, while very large, will not, it is believed, be in excess of the estimates made before the enactment of the law. This liberal enactment of the law would suggest that we should have more careful scrutiny of bills for special relief, both as to the cases where relief is granted and as to the amount allowed.

ADMISSION OF NEW STATES.

The admission of the States of Wyoming and Idaho to the Union are events full of interest and congratulations, not only to the people of those States but to the people of the United States, who are so happily endowed with a full participation in our privileges and responsibilities, but to all our people. Another belt of States stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

THE CENSUS.

The enumeration of the people of the United States under the provision of the act of March 1, 1890, has been completed, and the result will be at once officially communicated to Congress. The completion of this decennial enumeration devolves upon Congress the duty of making a new apportionment of Representatives "among the several States, according to their respective numbers."

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

The report of the Secretary of Agriculture deserves special attention, in view of the fact that the year has been marked in a very unusual degree by agitation and organization among the farmers, looking to an increase in the profits of their business. It will be found that the efforts of the department have been intelligently and zealously devoted to the promotion of the interests entrusted to its care. A very important improvement in the market prices in the leading farm products during the year is noticed. The price of wheat advanced from 81 cents in October, 1889, to 100 cents in October, 1890; corn from 31 cents to 54 cents; and hogs from 19 cents to 25 cents. Meats showed a substantial but not so large an increase. The export trade in live animals and fowls shows a very large increase, the total value of such exports for the year ending June 30, 1890, was \$33,000,000, and the increase over the preceding year was over \$15,000,000. Nearly 200,000 more cattle and over 45,000 more hogs were exported than in the preceding year. The export trade in beef and pork products and in dairy products was very largely increased, the increase in the article of butter alone being from 15,504,975 pounds to 29,748,042 pounds, and the total increase in the value of meat and dairy products exported being \$4,000,000. This trade, so directly helpful to the farmer, it is believed, will be yet further and very largely increased when the system of inspection and sanitary supervision now provided by law is brought fully into operation.

CATTLE INSPECTION.

The efforts of the Secretary to establish the healthfulness of our meats against the disparaging imputations that have been put upon them abroad have resulted in substantial progress. Veterinary surgeons are now dispatched to inspect the live cattle from this country landed at the English docks, and during the several months they have been on duty no case of contagious pleuro-pneumonia has been reported. This inspection abroad and the domestic inspection of live animals and pork products, provided for by the act of August 30, 1890, will afford as perfect a guarantee for the wholesomeness of our meats as any foreign consumption can be anywhere given. Any foreign consumption and its non-acceptance will quite clearly reveal the real motive of any continued restriction of their use; and that having been made clear, the duty of the Executive will be very plain.

THE BEET SUGAR INDUSTRY.

The information given by the Secretary of the progress and prospects of the beet sugar industry is full of interest. It has already passed the experimental stage and is a commercial success. The area over which the beet sugar is raised is increasing very rapidly, and another field crop of great value is offered to the choice of the farmer.

LEGISLATION.

I congratulate the Congress and the country upon the passage at the first session of the Fifty-first Congress of an unusual number of laws of very high importance. That the results of this legislation will be the quickening and enlargement of our manufacturing industries, larger and better markets for our breadstuffs and provisions both at home and abroad, more constant employment and better wages for our working people, and an increased supply of a safe currency for the transaction of business, I do not doubt some of these measures were enacted at so late a period that the beneficial effects upon commerce which were in the contemplation of Congress have as yet but partially manifested themselves.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY.

The general trade and industrial conditions throughout the country during the year have shown a marked improvement. For many years prior to 1888 the merchandise balances of foreign trade had been largely in our favor, but in that year and the year following they turned against us. It is very gratifying to know that the last fiscal year again shows a balance in our favor of over \$60,000,000. The bank clearings, which furnish a good test of the volume of business transacted for the first ten months of the year 1890 show as compared with the same months of 1889, an increase for the whole country of about 8.4 per cent, while the increase outside of the city of New York was over 13 per cent. During the month of October the clearings of the whole country showed an increase of 3.1 per cent, over October, 1889, while outside of New York the increase was 11 1/2 per cent. These figures show that the increase in the volume of business was very general throughout the country. That this large business is being conducted on a profitable basis is shown by the fact that there were three hundred less failures reported in October, 1890, than in the same month of the preceding year, with liabilities diminished by about \$5,000,000.

THE McKinley TARIFF.

The General Tariff act has only partially gone into operation, some of its important provisions being limited to take effect at dates yet in the future. The general provisions of the law have been in force less than sixty days. The permanent effect on prices is still standing in conjecture. It is curious to note that the advance in the price of articles wholly unaffected by the Tariff act was by many hastily ascribed to that act. Notice was not taken of the fact that the desire of the market was upward from influences wholly apart from the recent tariff legislation. The enlargement of our currency by the Silver bill undoubtedly gave an upward tendency to trade and had a marked effect on prices; but this natural and desirable effect of the Silver legislation was by many erroneously attributed to the Tariff act.

TARIFF REVISION.

There is neither wisdom nor suggestion that the subject of tariff revision should be opened to promiscuous public trial. It is quite true that every tariff schedule is subject to objections. No bill was ever framed, I suppose, that in all of its rates and classifications had the full approval even of a party caucus. Such legislation is always open to criticism, and it is a compromise as to details, and the present law is no exception. But, in its general scope and effect, I think, it will justify the support of those who believe that American legislation should conserve and defend American trade and the wages of American workmen.

The misinformation as to the terms of the act, which has been so widely disseminated at home and abroad, will be corrected by experience and the evil auguries as its results caused by the market reports, the savings banks, international trade balances and the general prosperity of our people. Already we begin to hear from abroad and from our custom-houses that the prohibitory effect upon importations imputed to the act is not justified. The imports at the port of New York for the first two weeks of November were nearly 5 per cent. greater than for the same period in 1889 and 29 per cent. greater than in the same period of 1888. And so far from being an act to limit exports, it is a confidence in the market, and a confidence in the foreign trade that we shall secure a larger and more profitable participation in foreign trade than we have ever enjoyed, and that we shall recover a proportionate participation in the ocean carrying trade of the world.

PROHIBITORY OR RETALIATORY LEGISLATION.—There is no disposition among any of our people to promote prohibitory or retaliatory legislation. Our policies are adopted not to the hurt of others, but to secure for ourselves those advantages that fairly grow out of our favored position as a nation. Our form of government, with its incident of universal suffrage, makes it impossible that we will oppress our working people from the agitations and distresses which scant work and wages that have no margin for comfort always get. But after all this is done, it will be found that our markets are open to friendly commercial exchange of enormous value to the other great powers.

RECIPROCITY.

There were but two methods of obtaining control of this question open to Congress. To place all these articles upon the dutiable list subject to such treaty agreements as could be secured, or to place them all presently upon the free list, but subject to the reversion of duties if the countries to which they were received they should refuse to give us suitable reciprocal benefits. This latter method, I think, possesses great advantages. It expresses in advance the consent of Congress to reciprocity, and it makes it impossible that these products must have otherwise been delayed and unascertained until each treaty was ratified by the Senate and the necessary legislation enacted by Congress. Experience has shown that some treaties looking to reciprocal trade have failed to secure a two-thirds vote in the Senate for ratification, and others having passed that stage have for years awaited the concurrence of the House and Senate in such modifications of our revenue laws as were necessary to put effect to their provisions. Now have the concurrence of both Houses in advance in a distinct and definite offer of free entry to our ports of specific articles. The Executive is not required to deal in conjecture, but in fact. Congress will accept. Indeed this reciprocity provision is more than an offer. Our part of the bargain is complete; delivery has been made, and when the countries from which we receive sugar, coffee, teas and hides, have placed on their free lists such of our products as shall be agreed upon, as an equivalent for our concession, a proclamation of that fact completes the transaction; and in the meantime our own people have free sugar, tea, coffee and hides.

NEW LEGISLATION.

In addition to the important bills that became laws before the adjournment of the last session, some other bills of the highest importance were well advanced toward a final vote and now stand upon the calendars of the two Houses in favored positions. The present session has a fixed limit, and if these measures are not now brought to a final vote all the work that has been done upon them by this Congress is lost. The proper consideration of these, of an appropriation bill and of the annual appropriation bills will require not only that no working day of the session shall be lost, but that measures of minor and local interest shall not be allowed to interrupt or retard the progress of those that are of universal interest. In view of these conditions, I refrain from bringing before you at this time some suggestions that would otherwise be made, and most earnestly invoke your attention to the duty of perfecting the important legislation now well advanced to some of these measures, which seem to me most important I now briefly call your attention.

AMERICAN STEAMSHIP LINE.

I desire to repeat with added urgency the recommendations contained in my last annual message in relation to the developments of American steamship lines. The reciprocity clause of the Tariff bill will be largely limited, and its benefits retarded and diminished, if provision is not contemporaneously made to encourage the establishment of first-class steam communication between our ports and the ports of such nations as may meet our overtures for enlarged commercial exchanges.

THE INTERNATIONAL-AMERICAN BANK.

I had occasion, in May last, to transmit to

Congress a report adopted by the International American Conference upon the subject of the incorporation of an international American bank, with a view to facilitating money exchange between the states represented in that conference. Such an institution would greatly promote the quickening and enlargement of our manufacturing industries, and a careful and well-guarded character be granted.

BELIEF FOR THE SUPREME COURT.

The bill for the relief of the Supreme Court has, after many years of discussion, reached a position when final action is easily attainable, and it is hoped that any differences of opinion may be so harmonized as to save the essential features of this very important measure. In this connection I earnestly renew my recommendation that the salaries of the Judges of the United States District courts be so readjusted that none of them shall receive less than \$5,000 per annum.

A NATIONAL BANKRUPT LAW.

The enactment of a National bankrupt law I still regard as very desirable. The Constitution having given to Congress jurisdiction of this subject, it should be exercised and uniform rules provided for the administration of insolvent debtors. The inconveniences resulting from the occasional and temporary exercise of this power by Congress, and from the conflicting State codes of insolvency which come into force immediately should be removed by the enactment of a simple, inexpensive and permanent National bankrupt law.

THE POSTAL TELEGRAPH SCHEME.

The use of the telegraph by the Post-Office Department as a means for the rapid transmission of written communications is, I believe, upon proper terms, quite desirable. The Government does not own or operate the railroads, and it should not, I think, own or operate telegraph lines. It does, however, seem to be quite practicable for the Government to contract with the telegraph companies, as it does with the railroad companies to carry as specified rates such communications as the senders may designate for this method of transmission. I recommend that such legislation be enacted as will enable the Post-Office Department fairly to test by experiment the advantages of such a use of the telegraph.

ELECTION LAWS.

If any intelligent and loyal company of American citizens were required to catalogue the essential humane conditions of National life, I do not doubt that with absolute unanimity they would begin with free and honest elections. And it is gratifying to know generally that the great body of our people demand for better election laws. But against this sign of hope and progress must be set the depressing and undeniable fact that election laws and methods are sometimes cunningly contrived to secure minority control, while violence completes the shortcomings of fraud.

In my last annual message I suggested that the development of the existing law, providing a Federal supervision of Congressional elections, offered a certain number of reforms these abuses. The need of such a law has manifested itself in many parts of the country, and its wholesome restraints and penalties will be useful in all. The constitutionality of such legislation has been affirmed by the Supreme Court, and the result of its enforcement is evidenced by the character of the opposition that is made to it. It has been denounced as if it were a new exercise of Federal power and an invasion of the rights of the States. Nothing could be further from the truth. Congress has no power to interfere with the election of members of Congress. It has declared that votes for members of Congress must be written or printed ballots. It has provided for the appointment by the Circuit Courts in certain cases, and upon the petition of a certain number of citizens of election supervisors, and made it their duty to supervise the registration of voters conducted by the State officers; to challenge persons offering to register; to regularly inspect and scrutinize the registration lists, and to make a return to the lists for the purpose of identification and the prevention of frauds; to attend at elections and remain with the boxes till the ballots are counted; to attach to the registry lists and election returns any statement touching the accuracy and fairness of the registration and election, and to take and transmit to the clerk of the House of Representatives any evidence of fraudulent practices which may be presented to them. The same law provides for the appointment of a certain number of United States marshals to attend at the polls, support the supervisors in the discharge of their duties and to arrest persons violating the election laws. The provisions of this familiar title of the revised statutes have been put into exercise by both the party and the parties, and in the North as well as in the South, by the filing with the court of the petitions required by law.

The present law stops just a little short of effectiveness, for it surrenders to the local authorities all the power over the certification which establishes the prima facie right to a seat in the House of Representatives. This defect should be cured. Equality of representation and the purity of the electors must be maintained, or every thing of value in our system of Government is lost. The qualifications of an elector must be sought in the law, not in the opinions, prejudices, or fears of any class, however powerful. The path of the elector to the ballot-box must be free from all obstacles, and the anticipation of fraud; the count so true that none shall gainsay it. Such a law should be absolutely non-partisan and impartial. It should give the advantage to honesty and to the contrary to malice. It should be nothing sectional about this creed and it is shall happen that the penalties of laws intended to enforce these rights fall here and not there, it is not because the law is sectional, but because, happily, crime is local and not universal. Nor should we forget that the very law which relates to elections or to any other subject, whether enacted by the State or by the Nation, has force behind it. The courts, the marshal or constable, the posse comitatus, the prison, are all aids to the law. One can not be justly charged with unfriendliness to any section or class who seek only to restrain violations of law and of personal right. No community will find lawlessness profitable. No community can afford to have its own officers who are charged with the preservation of the public peace and the restraint of the criminal classes are themselves product of fraud or violence. The magistrate is then without respect and the law without sanction. The floods of lawlessness can not be leaved and made to flow in one channel. The killing of a United States marshal carrying a writ of arrest for an election offense is full of prompting and suggestion. The officers are pursued by a city marshal for a crime against life or property. But it is said that this legislation will revive race animosities, and some have even suggested that when the peaceful methods of fraud are made impossible that they may be supplanted by intimidation and violence. If the proposed law gives to any qualified elector by a hair's weight more than his equal influence, or detracts by so much from another qualified elector, or if it fatally impeaches. But if the law is equal and the animosities it is to evoke grow out of the fact that some electors have been accustomed to exercise the franchise for others as well as for themselves, then these animosities ought not to be confessed without shame and can not be given any weight in the discussion without dishonor. No choice is left to me but to enforce with vigor all laws intended to secure the purity of our elections, and to recommend that the inadequacies of such laws be promptly remedied.

APPROPRIATION BILLS.

The preparation of the general appropriation bills should be conducted with the greatest care and the closest scrutiny of expenditures. Appropriations should be adequate to the needs of the public service, but they should be absolutely free from prodigality.

NO TIME TO WASTE.

I venture again to remind you that the brief time remaining for the consideration of the important legislation now awaiting your attention offers no margin for waste. If the present duty is discharged with diligence, fidelity and courage the work of the Fifty-first Congress may be confidently submitted to the Congress of the next people.

BENJAMIN HARRISON.
Executive Mansion, D. C., Dec. 1, 1890.